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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 003580

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STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, LONDON FOR TSOU, PARIS FOR ZEYA

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SUBJECT: KUWAITI FOREIGN MINISTER ON WASHINGTON VISIT, FUEL ISSUES, UNAMI

REF: A. KUWAIT 3565

[B](#). KUWAIT 3412

[C](#). KUWAIT 3331

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In a meeting with the Ambassador August 9, FM Shaykh Dr. Mohammed Al-Salem Al-Sabah said PM Shaykh Sabah Al-Sabah was "very satisfied" with his July 1 visit to Washington. The FM reported that, as requested by the PM, he delivered messages to Saudi King Abdullah Al-Saud, then Crown Prince, and Syrian President Bashar Al-Asad, capturing President Bush's conversation with the PM on July 1. On behalf of CENTCOM, the Ambassador requested 1) Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) fuel payments, and 2) increased Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) fuel supplies from 800 thousand gallons per day (gpd) to 1.015 million gpd. While not turning down the request for additional fuel, the FM said Kuwait is already at refined product capacity and suggested the U.S. ask other Gulf countries for the additional fuel. The FM said the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) Status of Mission Agreement (SOMA) would be approved by Amiri decree this summer. He also assured the Ambassador that the GOK would continue to support the operations of the Humanitarian Operations Center (HOC). The Ambassador pressed for continued concrete actions related to trafficking in persons (TIP) issues. End summary.

FM Conveys POTUS' Messages to Saudi Arabia and Syria

[1](#)2. (C) PM Shaykh Sabah was "very satisfied" with his conversation with POTUS during his July trip to Washington, the FM said. Shaykh Sabah asked Shaykh Dr. Mohammed to convey POTUS' concurrence with Shaykh Sabah's view that Saudi Arabia needs time to implement reforms to then Crown Prince Abdullah Al-Saud. The FM said Crown Prince Abdullah was not surprised and responded "positively" to the message. Crown Prince Abdullah told the FM that he had a very positive impression of Secretary Rice after meeting her during his last trip to Washington.

[1](#)3. (C) The FM also conveyed POTUS' concerns about Syrian actions to President Bashar Al-Asad. According to the FM, he was "very frank" with Al-Asad telling him that Syria has a "serious issue on its hands." Al-Asad was "grateful" for his candor, but expressed frustration with the U.S., the FM said. "We have done everything the U.S. asked us to do," Al-Asad said. Al-Asad asked the U.S. to specify exactly what it wants Syria to do. He also complained that the U.S. has not given Syria promised equipment to guard the border with Iraq, the FM reported. Shaykh Dr. Mohammed said Al-Asad asked him to convey his views to the U.S.

No Clear Response on CFLCC Fuel Request

[1](#)4. (C) The Ambassador presented CENTCOM Coalition Forces Land Component Command's (CFLCC) request for: 1) the formalization of DCA fuel payments by the GOK (for fuel used in Kuwait), and 2) an increase in the amount of OIF fuel provided by Kuwait from 800 thousand gpd to 1.015 million gpd. The FM said Kuwait has already reached capacity for refined products and suggested the U.S. ask other Gulf countries to provide the additional fuel. He concluded by saying he would look into the issue.

UNAMI SOMA To Be Approved

[1](#)5. (C) The FM assured the Ambassador that the UNAMI SOMA would be approved by Amiri decree this summer. Regarding the Humanitarian Operations Center (HOC), the FM said the HOC was being relocated, not terminated. HOC operations would still continue as needed, but with a reduced staff, Shaykh Dr. Mohammed pledged.

TIP Update

16. (C) The Ambassador mentioned the need to make sustained efforts to address trafficking in persons problems and explained the current state-of-play in the review of Kuwait's performance. The FM responded that the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MOSAL) was "very serious" about this issue and has taken "serious steps" to prevent worker exploitation. He cited a recent decree requiring all sponsors to sign a contract with domestic workers and their recruitment agencies to be filed with the Ministry of Interior effective October 11. MOSAL Acting Undersecretary Mohammed Al-Kandari highlighted these GOK actions in a meeting with G/TIP Ambassador Miller July 27 (ref B), the FM said.

Possible Iranian Involvement in Border Incident

17. (C) Asked about reports of Iranian involvement in the recent border incident (ref A and C), the FM responded that there was speculation, but no solid evidence. He said Kuwaiti sources reported seeing members of the militant Shi'a Badr Brigade among demonstrators. Iran has an enormous influence over "that part" of Iraq, he said. While Iran might not have instigated the protests, it did not stop them either, the FM added. (See Kuwait 3565 for the FM's analysis of the recent border problems.)

Biographic Note on Amir

18. (C) The FM said the Amir was suffering from Parkinson's disease. He claimed that although impaired physically, the Amir still retains his mental capacity. (Note: The Amir returned to Kuwait August 9 following an extended convalescence in the U.S. and a brief trip to Switzerland. He used a wheelchair upon arrival and was whisked to a waiting vehicle soon after he disembarked from the plane. End note.)

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